

The Mirror

OF

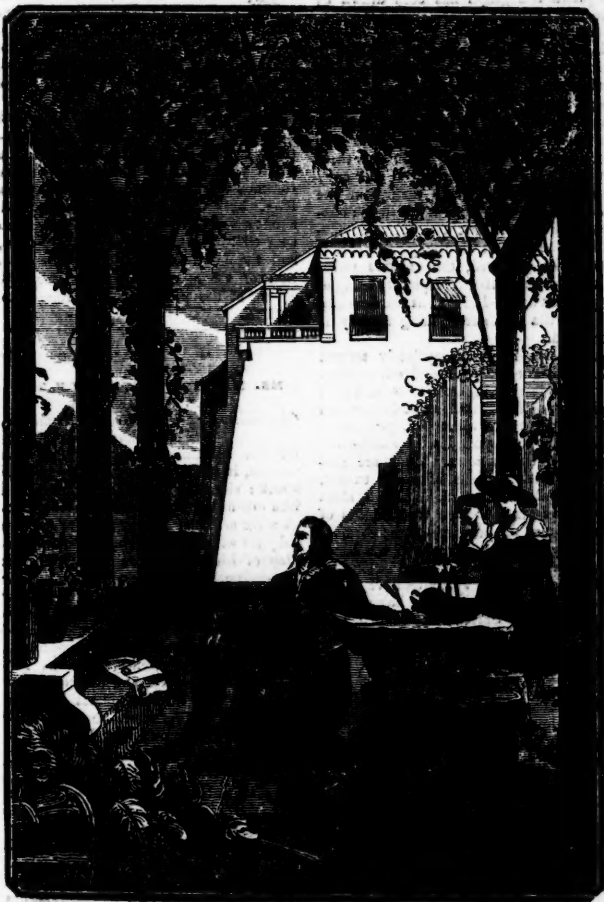
LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

No. 312.]

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 1828.

[PRICE 2d.

The Birthplace of Tasso.



THE BIRTHPLACE OF TASSO.

THE birthplace of "the prince of Italian poets" is situate on the promontory of Sorrento, on the winding shores of the gulf of Naples. Here, at the age of seven years, he recited verses and orations of his own composition; but our engraving represents the poet, (in more advanced life,) at his studies, whilst two girls are secretly listening to their recital, as he proceeds. The original is painted by Dejuinne, a French artist, of which an exquisite lithograph has been drawn by Aubrey Lecomte.

In person, Tasso is described by his biographers, as tall and well-proportioned, with a countenance pale through sickness and study. His forehead was square and high, his eyes of a deep blue, full, and piercing, and his countenance altogether noble and expressive. His voice was clear and solemn; and doubtless there are scores of our readers who will envy the fair listeners in the picture of the French artist, who has embodied the characteristics of the poet with tolerable fidelity. The figures in the picture are, it should be observed, the creative introduction of the artist, (the picture being of very recent date—1824,) but the accuracy of the villa and surrounding scenery is preserved.

Italy has been appropriately termed the *Elysium of Europe*, and our engraving is a pleasing vignette of what Virgil calls its "*sedes beatas*." The Neapolitan villas are for the most part painted in fresco, and ornamented with statues copied from the antique. They are surrounded with gardens of small extent, but carefully decorated. Large aloes planted in vases formed from blocks of lava, grow on the pedestals of the portals; and everything reminds you of the ornamental taste of the ancients.

The eruptions of Vesuvius have as yet spared the eastern side of the bay of Naples, on which Sorrento is situated, and reserved a delicious rural retreat for its inhabitants. On the same shore are the stupendous colonnades of *Pæstum*, where strangers terminate their tour.

The illustration is a fascinating scene for the lovers of fervid poetry, where everything accords with the romantic genius

And eagle-spirit of a child of song.

whilst the broken and mouldering capitals, intermixed with the wild luxuriance of Nature,—the aerial groves of vines and trellis-work above,—shrubs clinging to the pillars,—with the placid bay in the distance—make up a scene of extraordinary interest.

Lord Byron has deepened the melancholy fate of Tasso, in making the confinement of the poet, in the Hospital of Ferrara, by the Duke of Este, on a charge of pretended madness—the subject of a beautiful lament; and his friend and illustrator, Mr. Hobhouse, in his Notes to *Childe Harold*, gives the following description of Tasso's cell:—

In the hospital of St. Anna, at Ferrara, they show a cell, over the door of which is the following inscription:—

Rispettate, O Posterì, in celebrità di questa stanza dove Torquato Tasso infermo più di tristezza che delirio, detenuto dimorò anno VII mesi II, scrisse verse e prose, e fu rimesso in libertà ad istanza della città di Bergamo, nel giorno VI Luglio 1586.

The dungeon is below the ground floor of the hospital, and the light penetrates through its grated window from a small yard, which seems to have been common to other cells. It is nine paces long, between five and six wide, and about seven feet high. The bedstead, so they tell, has been carried off piece-meal, and the door half cut away by the devotion of those whom "the verse and prose" of the prisoner have brought to Ferrara.

Fine Arts.

MR. MARTIN'S PICTURE OF THE
FALL OF NINEVEH.
(Exhibiting at the Western Exchange,
Old Bond-street.)

OF Mr. Martin's well-earned fame as a painter, it is unnecessary for us here to speak; since his past efforts have proved him one of the first, if not the most imaginative artist of his time. Indeed, the subjects which he has chosen for the display of his talent, would deter all but first-rate genius from an attempt at their embodiment. In this task, the painter may, perhaps, have in some instances disregarded a few of the technicalities of art; but when the vast and comprehensive character of scenes, such as Mr. Martin has embodied, and the impressive sublimity with which they act upon the most indifferent reflector,—be duly considered—we must own that for such performances

Applause in spite of trivial faults is due.

We do not, however, attempt to impugn Mr. Martin's perfect knowledge of the rules of art; but our object is rather to extenuate some few inaccuracies which may have been detected by the nice admirers of art, in the details of his pictures. For the most part, they represent scenes of illimitable and indefinable interest;

and with such an anecdote as that of Raphael and the Nun in our recollection, we shall no longer wonder at any inadvertencies into which their contemplation may have led the painter.

Many of our readers recollect Mr. Martin's splendid picture of *Belshazzar's Feast*; the merits of which have been more extensively made known by a mezzotinto engraving. The *Fall of Nineveh* is a picture (we think) of larger dimensions, and of the same gorgeous and magnificent character. To form some estimate of its great, if not gigantic character, we must refer to the description of the fated city.

All historians agree in representing NINEVEH to have been of immense size. The Bible states it to have been three days' journey in circumference: Strabo says it was much larger than Babylon. It was the capital of the Assyrian empire, the destruction of which is involved in impenetrable darkness. It is said to have been built by Ninus, the son of Nimrod, and husband of the sanguinary Semiramis, on his return from a successful war against the more eastern nations. Ninyas, the son of Ninus and Semiramis, succeeded to the throne on the death of his mother; and from his reign to that of Sardanapalus, a period estimated by some writers at almost 1,400 years, nothing is with certainty known of the Assyrian empire. With Sardanapalus fell that empire and its splendid capital Nineveh. Of its overthrow, our limits will scarcely allow us to present the reader with an outline; but of still greater difficulty is it to sketch the revolting character of Sardanapalus, its ruler—perhaps one of the most disgusting portraits in the page of history—on whom Lord Byron makes to say,

I ne'er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaffed me down to their abasement;
and who is branded with

The despotism of vice—
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury—
The negligence—the apathy, the evils
Of sensual sloth.

We must, however, make room for the following description of the city, by a living poet:—

CLOSE to the palace, in the city's midst,
A lofty mound, like to a mountain stood,—
Work of Semiramis, long ages back,
To honour Ninus, her loved lord and king.
Whose ashes slept beneath. The founder he
Of that great city, which from him took name;
For when, victorious o'er unnumbered lauds,—
From Egypt and Propontis stretching east
To Bactria, whose impassable hills awhile
Drove back the flood of conquest,—he returned,
Exulting in his might—"I will build up
A city"—he exclaimed—"the like of which
On earth hath never been,—and shall not be."

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Then by the banks of Tigris he traced out
Its boundaries; a three days' journey round,
And oblong square its shape. A million hands
Toiled then upon the work. A hundred feet
He made the walls in height; in thickness such,
Three chariots on their summit, ranked abreast,
With amplest space between, might try the race.
Above the walls, and twice their height, arose
A thousand and five hundred warlike towers:
Of massive brass at every tower a gate.
The city with a like magnificence
He fashioned:—palaces and temples huge,—
Fountains, and baths,—and gardens, high in air
Uplifted, where the cedar and the palm,
As on the mountain's top deep-rooted, waved
Their giant heads:—and o'er broad Tigris threw
A ponderous bridge. Thus in his pride did he:
And never since upon the earth hath been
A city like to his. But then he died:
And was consigned to dust: and over him
This mound, for an eternal monument,
Semiramis upthrew. Above the walls—
Above the towers high soaring it arose;
A beacon to the traveller far away,
Who there at morn the sun's first glory hailed,
And blest his latest beam at evening there.
Upon the top a rich pavilion stood,
Where, in the sultry hours, Assyria's king,
To wanton in the cooling breeze oft went,
That still was stirring there, while NINEVEH
Drew fever breath below. A smooth firm path,
From base to summit, like a serpent's train,
Around the mountain coiled. Unnumbered
shrubs,
And trees of graceful form, and every flower
That scents the eastern breeze, were planted
there,
Making of that huge monument of death
A garden of delight.

FALL OF NINEVEH, by E. Atherstone.*

To the event of the picture. The city is besieged by Arbaces, the Mede, aided by the treachery of Belesis, the captain of the guard of Sardanapalus, and who, by his skill in astrology, impressed his master with a prophecy that "Nineveh could never be taken till the river became her enemy." The forces of Arbaces remained two years before the city without any visible effect; but in the third year, the river, swelled by unusual rains, came up to the city, and overflowed within a few shades of the wall. Sardanapalus now gave himself up to despair, and dreading to fall into the hands of the enemy, retired into his palace; in a court of which he caused a vast pile of wood to be raised; and heaping upon it all his

* Mr. Atherstone is already known to the public by his poems of the "Last Days of Hercules," "Abradates and Panthea," and "A Midsummer-day's Dream," but Mr. Martin does not speak from the partiality of friendship, when he expresses his confident anticipations of an enduring fame to the poet from his "FALL OF NINEVEH."

It is proper, however, to prevent misapprehension by stating that the painting is not intended to be a mere illustration of the poem; and no one who knows the original genius of Mr. Atherstone will require to be informed, that the poem is as little an emanation from the painting. Engaged each in his own line of art, on the same high theme, the society of Mr. Atherstone and Mr. Martin was an interchange merely of encouragement and enthusiasm; from which both, perhaps, reaped some addition to the spirit of their respective performances.—*Mr. Martin's "Description" of his Picture.*

gold and silver, and royal apparel, and at the same time enclosing his eunuchs and concubines in an apartment within the pile, he set fire thereto, and so destroyed himself and the rest; which the enemy hearing, entered the city by the breach, and became lords of the place.

The painting represents the moment in which Sardanapalus, with his concubines, are going to the pile. This group occupies the foreground, and abounds with many interesting episodes of human suffering; in which are the luxurious king with his bosom favourites—the ill-requited affection of his queen, who is led off by her maids—a lingering group, divided betwixt their attachment to the king, and their hopes of life and safety with the queen—Laomedon, a Trojan warrior and ally of the king, furiously lifting his sword to punish a host of insolent slaves, who are triumphantly drinking to the royal downfall—and one of the third rulers, with the staff of state in his hand, calling on the heavens to witness, that, through his disregard of *their* counsels, the king had brought destruction on the city. On the left of the picture are the torch-bearers waiting to set fire to the stupendous funeral pile; and on the right is a wing of the gigantic palace, with its celebrated hanging gardens crowded with the affrighted people. "The style of architecture," says Mr. Martin, "partakes of Egyptian on one hand, and of the most ancient Indian on the other, and has been invented as the most appropriate for a county situated betwixt the two countries." The decorations of the temple are upon the authority of Herodotus, who describes them as having been sculptured upon the temple of Bel in Babylon. The centre of the palace is supposed to be behind the spectator of the picture; and the other wing to be also out of the picture, considerably to his left hand. In the distance are the tomb of Ninus, said to have been a mile and a furlong in height, and a mile and two furlongs in diameter—the Tigris, with its bridge lit by huge naphtha lamps—the walls of the city, —and a gateway in which stands a human figure, which, estimated at the height of six feet, gives the scale of measurement by which every object in the picture is worked. The hour is supposed to be soon after sunset. Twilight covers the city, except where it is reddened by flames; but the whole of the foreground shines out beneath the flash of lightning, of which a small portion is visible on the left of the picture.

Such is a hasty outline of the grand subject of Mr. Martin's picture. As a splendid effort of genius in illustrating

one of the sublimest events in biblical history, it cannot be too highly treasured. We meet with no precise historical narration of the Fall of Nineveh, but from the Prophecies, several denunciations of her overthrow may be taken. Mr. Martin has judiciously appended some of these to his descriptive catalogue—as *Nahum*, chap. i., ii., iii. In *Jonah* too, chap. iii. we may add, the prophet is commanded to go unto Nineveh, "an exceeding great city of three days journey;" and in the following chapter, it occurs in the reply of God to his querulous prophet, who is reproved by the type of a gourd: "And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons," &c.

Where history is silent, Mr. Martin has supplied the details of the picture from his own vigorous imagination, as in the architecture of the temple, &c. already pointed out. Altogether he has produced a picture of extraordinary merit, and perhaps as frightful a scene of divine wrath as it is possible for any artist of our time to embody. On one side is a sublime representation of lightning, while on the other the moon rides in sullen majesty, half eclipsed by dense clouds—and in the back, the flames of the distant city rise in terrible splendour, and throw a lured tinge over the harbour and shipping beneath the walls; but the interest of the spectator in tracing the episodes of the foreground will perhaps be somewhat lessened by the coarse colouring of some of its groups.

In the same room with the *Fall of Nineveh* is Mr. Martin's picture of *The Deluge*; both of which, we are happy to learn, it is proposed to engrave. On the sides of the room are likewise Mr. M.'s *Illustrations of Milton*, besides other productions of the same master-hand. The coincidence of Mr. Martin's picture and Mr. Atherstone's poem being simultaneously in progress, (as noticed by Mr. M.) has doubtless been advantageous to both parties, and consequently to the public gratification. A race between a painter and a poet would be a contest of no ordinary interest, though of less advantage to the subject than the mutual progress of the artists, as in the PICTURE and POEM of the *Fall of Nineveh*.

As a piece of intelligence, doubly gratifying to the lovers of the Fine Arts, we are happy to state that the copyright of Mulready's picture of the *Wolf and Lamb* has been purchased for 1000 guineas, and appropriated to the Artists' Fund. The presidency of the Lord Chan-

cellar at the anniversary of this Society, on Saturday last, was a rich treat, even setting aside his lordship's hereditary taste for the arts.

EGYPTIAN MUMMY.

(For the Mirror.)

AMONGST the bandages of the Egyptian Mummy presented to the Philosophical Hall, in the town of Leeds, by the late John Bloyds, Esq., a small piece of red leather has been lately found, stamped with hieroglyphic characters, which determine the date of this interesting relic of antiquity. They are the royal legend of Ramises V., the Amenophis—Memphis of the Greek writers, the father of the great Sesostris, and the last monarch of Menetho's eighteenth dynasty of the kings of Egypt. He ascended the throne of the Pharaohs in the year 1493, B. C. The individual, therefore, whose remains are still in so perfect a state of preservation, was the contemporary of Moses, and officiated as incense-bearer and scribe to the shrine of the God Mandou, at Thebes in Upper Egypt, more than 3,300 years ago.

W. G. C.

Calendar of Nature.

MAY AND JUNE.

THE weather during May and June is usually the most pleasant of the whole year; the air is peculiarly soft and refreshing, being scented with the balmy fragrance of innumerable flowers and opening buds. Almost every part of the vegetable creation is in vigorous growth, and holding forth the pleasing hope of future perfection. The ear is ever saluted by the concert of the groves, and all nature seems to rejoice. The winds are generally variable, in which case there are alternations of showers and sunshine; if steady from any of the northerly points, with a clear sky, frosty air sometimes chills the early hours, and checks the tender shoots. Changeable weather having continued for the last three months, it is probable it will continue four or six weeks longer.

Quadrupeds.—Moles are affected by the season; though the constant tenants of darkness, their economy in forming their abodes, and exertions in search of their food, arrest the notice of the observer. In the beginning of May, the female begins to prepare a nest, either under a bush or hedge, and not uncommonly in the open pastures, by throwing up a larger hill than usual. The water shrew may be seen diving in search of food amongst the mud in spring-water ditches.

The Fishes which appear in the London market in May and June, are chiefly the salmon, turbot, mackerel, doree, red mullet, and pike. The doree (corrupted from *adorée*, worshipped, or probably from *dorée*, gilt; in allusion to its splendid colour) *Zæus Faber Lin.*, is said by some to be the fish out of whose mouth St. Peter took the tribute-money, leaving on its sides those incontestible proofs of the identity of the fish, the marks of his finger and thumb. Others contend that the fish in question was the haddock. It is rather hard to determine the dispute; for the doree also asserts an origin of its spots of a similar nature, but of a much later date than the former. St. Christopher, in wading through an arm of the sea, having caught a fish of the kind, *en passant*, as an eternal memorial of the fact, left the impression on its sides to be transmitted to all posterity. In our own country it was very long before the fish attracted notice, at least as an edible one. We are indebted to that judicious actor and *bon vivant*, the late Mr. Quin, for adding a most delicious luxury to our table, who, overcoming all the vulgar prejudices on account of its deformity, has effectually established its reputation. It is found on the southern shores of this kingdom. Those of the largest size are taken in the Bay of Biscay, and in the Mediterranean. Ovid has called it *varus Faber*, which must have been owing to its excellence, not its scarcity. While living, the colour is very resplendent, and as if gilt, whence, according to some, the name; but sir Joseph Banks used to say it should be *adorée*, and that it was the most valuable fish, because it required no sauce. The red mullet, or surmullet, *Mullus Surmulëtus Lin.*, was highly esteemed by the Romans, and bore an exceedingly high price. The capricious epicures of the days of Horace, valued it in proportion to its size: not that the larger fish were more delicious, but that they were more difficult to be got. Evidence of the high price and the luxury of the age, appears from Juvenal:—

"Mullum sex millibus emit,
Æquantem sane paribus sestertia libris."

"The lavish slave
Six thousand pieces for a mullet gave,
A sesterce for each pound."

But Apicius, a man of consular dignity, gave a still more unconscionable sum, for he did not scruple bestowing 8,000 *nummi*, or 64*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.*, for a fish of as small size as the mullet.

Birds.—Before the middle of May all our summer birds will have arrived. The turtle-dove and fly-catcher are generally the two last. Throughout the two coming months, all the singing birds (those that

are constantly with us, as well as temporary visitors) may be heard or seen. It is their breeding season, after which, several of the emigrants which breed but once, leave us. The young of most birds appear; and the congregating of those of the insectivorous tribes make it difficult to distinguish the various kinds from each other.

Insects.—Swarms of these will now burst from their egg and chrysalis state. The dragon-flies leave the water, the element where they are born and bred, and soar in the air, where they may be seen darting after smaller winged insects, their prey. The gaudy family of butterflies, the mail-covered though splendid tribe of beetles, and the curiously mechanical fraternity of bees, everywhere intrude themselves on the notice of the naturalist. Spiders weave their geometric-formed webs on every spray; and which may be seen to reflect the prismatic colours, to entice the more readily their unwary victims. The common butterfly *Papilio chrysomela alba*, deposits a red fluid; and vast numbers of the insects in the air have dropt this fluid in such quantities, as to give rise to the story of a shower of red rain, which is given in Gassendi's *Life of Peirese*.

Reptiles.—Toads, frogs, and efts may soon be seen changing from their tadpole state to their perfect form. Soon after this, the frogs instinctively leave the water, and secrete themselves on land, to avoid the notice of their natural enemies, ducks, and other aquatic birds. Snakes cast their slough; and, with vipers and slow-worms, may be seen basking under hedges.

Worms.—The dew-worm may be seen lying abroad, on warm, moist mornings, or during warm rain. Snails, with their curiously-coloured spiral shells, may be seen roving about in moist weather, accompanied by their shellless congeners, wherever moisture exists or their favourite food abounds. In shallow brooks, in still parts at the edge of the stream, the *Górdius* may be seen, like an animated hair, waving its slender body in all directions.

Plants.—The greatest variety and the brightest glow of Flora's train regale the senses in the two ensuing months. In the *garden*, the conspicuous pæony, the irises, and ranunculuses are only equalled by the splendid flowering shrubs of North America. In the *fields*, the harebell, stitchwort, and herb-robert may be seen under every hedge; in *meadows*, the cuckoo-flower, germander-speedwell, scorpion-grass, and above all, that interesting tribe of plants, the *Orchidæ*, of which

several sorts will appear in this season. In the *marshes* may be seen the butterwort, loosestrife, and sweet-gale; and, in *rivers*, the white and yellow water lilies, water ranunculuses, and many other aquatic plants.—*Loudon's Magazine of Natural History*, No. 1.

The Anecdote Gallery.

"I dreamt that I was admitted into a long, spacious gallery, which had one side covered with pieces of all the famous painters who are now living, and the other with the works of the greatest masters that are dead."—*Spectator*.

ROBERT BURNS.

NEW YEAR'S LETTER,

Addressed by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop.

Elliesland, New-Year-Day Morning, 1789.

THIS, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. In that case, madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day,—the first Sunday of May,—a breezy, blue-skied noon sometime about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the *Spectator*, "The Vision of Mirza;" a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the fifth day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the

hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild briar-rose, the budding-birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never heard the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew, in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of gray plover, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clay? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM'S RECOLLECTIONS OF BURNS.

I HAVE the satisfaction, says Mr. Lockhart, of presenting the reader with some particulars of this part of Burns's history, derived from a source which every lover of Scotland and Scottish poetry must be prepared to hear mentioned with respect. It happened that at the time when our poet went to Nithsdale, the father of Mr. Allan Cunningham was steward on the estate of Dalswinton: he was, as all who have read the writings of his sons will readily believe, a man of remarkable talents and attainments: he was a wise and good man; a devout admirer of Burns's genius; and one of those sober neighbours who in vain strove, by advice and warning, to arrest the poet in the downhill path, towards which a thousand seductions were perpetually drawing him. Mr. Allan Cunningham was, of course, almost a child when he first saw Burns; but he was no common child; and, besides, in what he has to say on this subject, we may be sure we are hearing the substance of his benevolent and sagacious father's observations and reflections. His own boyish recollections of the poet's personal appearance and demeanour will, however, be read with interest.

"I was very young," says Allan Cunningham, "when I first saw Burns. He came to see my father, and their conversation turned partly on farming, partly on poetry, in both of which my father had taste and skill. Burns had just come to Nithsdale; and I think he appeared a shade more swarthy than he does in Nasmyth's picture, and at least ten years older than he really was at the time. His face was deeply marked by thought, and

the habitual expression intensely melancholy. His frame was very muscular and well proportioned, though he had a short neck, and something of a ploughman's stoop: he was strong, and proud of his strength. I saw him one evening match himself with a number of masons; and out of five-and-twenty practised hands, the most vigorous young men in the parish, there was only one that could lift the same weight as Burns.

"He had a very manly face, and a very melancholy look; but on the coming of those he esteemed, his looks brightened up, and his whole face beamed with affection and genius. His voice was very musical. I once heard him read *Tam o' Shanter*. I think I hear him now. His fine, manly voice followed all the undulations of the sense, and expressed as well as his genius had done, the pathos and humour, the horrible and the awful, of that wonderful performance. As a man feels, so will he write; and in proportion as he sympathizes with his author, so will he read him with grace and effect.

"I said that Burns and my father conversed about poetry and farming. The poet had newly taken possession of his farm of Elliesland—the masons were busy building his house—the applause of the world was with him, and a little of its money in his pocket—in short, he had found a resting-place at last. He spoke with great delight about the excellence of his farm, and particularly about the beauty of the situation. 'Yes,' my father said, 'the walks on the river bank are fine, and you will see from your windows some miles of the Nith; but you will also see several farms of fine rich *holm*,'* any one of which you might have had. You have made a poet's choice, rather than a farmer's."

"The truth of the case," says Mr. Cunningham, in another letter with which he has favoured me, "the truth is, that if Robert Burns liked his farm, it was more for the beauty of the situation than for the labours which it demanded. He was too wayward to attend to the stated duties of a husbandman, and too impatient to wait till the ground returned in gain the cultivation he bestowed upon it.

"The condition of a farmer, a Nithsdale one I mean, was then very humble. His one-story house had a covering of straw and a clay floor; the furniture was from the hands of a country carpenter; and, between the roof and floor, there seldom intervened a smoother ceiling than of rough rods and grassy turf—while a

* *Holm* is flat, rich meadow land, intervening between a stream and the general elevation of the adjoining country.

huge langsettle of black oak for himself, and a carved arm-chair for his wife, were the only matters out of keeping with the homely looks of his residence. He took all his meals in his own kitchen, and presided regularly among his children and domestics. He performed family worship every evening—except during the hurry of harvest, when that duty was perhaps limited to Saturday night. A few religious books, two or three favourite poets, the history of his country, and his Bible, aided him in forming the minds and manners of the family. To domestic education, Scotland owes as much as to the care of her clergy, and the excellence of her parish schools.

"The picture out of doors was less interesting. The ground from which the farmer sought support was generally in a very moderate state of cultivation. The implements with which he tilled his land were primitive and clumsy, and his own knowledge of the management of crops exceedingly limited. He plodded on in the regular slothful routine of his ancestors; he rooted out no bushes, he dug up no stones; he drained not, neither did he enclose; and weeds obtained their full share of the dung and the lime, which he bestowed more like a medicine than a meal on his soil. His plough was the rude old Scotch one; his harrows had as often teeth of wood as of iron; his carts were heavy and low-wheeled, or were, more properly speaking, tumbler-cars, so called to distinguish them from *trall-cars*, both of which were in common use. On these rude carriages his manure was taken to the field, and his crop brought home. The farmer himself corresponded in all respects with his imperfect instruments. His poverty secured him from risking costly experiments; and his hatred of innovation made him intrench himself behind a breast-work of old maxims and rustic saws, which he interpreted as oracles delivered against *improvement*. With ground in such condition, with tools so unfit, and with knowledge so imperfect, he sometimes succeeded in wringing a few hundred pounds *Scots* from the farm he occupied. Such was generally the state of agriculture when Burns came to Nithsdale. I know not how far his own skill was equal to the task of improvement—his trial was short and unfortunate. An important change soon took place, by which he was not fated to profit; he had not the foresight to see its approach, nor, probably, the fortitude to await its coming.

"In the year 1790, much of the ground in Nithsdale was leased at seven and ten and fifteen shillings per acre; and the farmer, in his person and his house, dif-

fered little from the peasants and mechanics around him. He would have thought his daughter wedded in her degree, had she married a joiner or a mason; and at kirk or market, all men beneath the rank of a "portioner" of the soil mingled together, equals in appearance and importance. But the war which soon commenced gave a decided impulse to agriculture; the army and navy consumed largely; corn rose in demand; the price augmented; more land was called into cultivation; and, as leases expired, the proprietors improved the grounds, built better houses, enlarged the rents; and the farmer was soon borne on the wings of sudden wealth above his original condition. His house obtained a slated roof, sash-windows, carpeted floors, plastered walls, and even began to exchange the hanks of yarn with which it was formerly hung, for paintings and piano-fortes. He laid aside his coat of home-made cloth; he retired from his seat among his servants; he—I am grieved to mention it—gave up family worship as a thing unfashionable, and became a kind of *rustic gentleman*, who rode a blood horse, and galloped home on market nights at the peril of his own neck, and to the terror of every modest pedestrian.* His daughters, too, no longer prided themselves in well-bleached linen and home-made webs; they changed their linsey-wolsey gowns for silk; and so ungracefully did their new state sit upon them, that I have seen their lovers coming in iron-shod clogs to their carpeted floors, and two of the proudest young women in the parish *skating* dung to their father's potato-field in silk stockings."

Mr. Cunningham sums up his reminiscences of Burns at Elliesland in these terms:—

"During the prosperity of his farm, my father often said that Burns conducted himself wisely, and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunscore Kirk on Sunday, though he expressed oftener than once his dislike to the stern Calvinism of that strict old divine, Mr. Kirkpatrick; he assisted in forming a reading club; and at weddings and house-heatings, and kirns, and other scenes of festivity, he was a welcome guest, universally liked by the young and the old. But the failure of his farming projects,* and the limited income with which he was compelled to

* Mr. Cunningham's description accords with the lines of Crabbe:—

"Who rides his hunter, who his horse adorns,
Who drinks his wine, and his disbursements
scores,

Who freely lives, and loves to show he can—
This is the farmer made the gentleman."

support an increasing family and an expensive station in life, preyed on his spirits; and, during these fits of despair, he was willing too often to become the companion of the thoughtless and the gross. I am grieved to say, that besides leaving the book too much for the bowl, and grave and wise friends for lewd and reckless companions, he was also in the occasional practice of composing songs, in which he surpassed the licentiousness, as well as the wit and humour, of the old Scottish muse. These have unfortunately found their way to the press, and I am afraid they cannot be recalled.

"In conclusion, I may say, that few men have had so much of the poet about them, and few poets so much of the man; the man was probably less pure than he ought to have been, but the poet was pure and bright to the last."

"BURNS," says Allan Cunningham, "was a zealous lover of his country, and has stamped his patriotic feelings in many a lasting verse.....His *Poor and Honest Sodger* laid hold at once on the public feeling, and it was every where sung with an enthusiasm which only began to abate when Campbell's *Erile of Erin* and *Wounded Hussar* were published. Duffries, which sent so many of her sons to the wars, rung with it from port to port; and the poet, wherever he went, heard it echoing from house and hall. I wish this exquisite and useful song, with *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*,—the *Song of Death*,—and *Does Haughty Gaul Invasion Threat*—all lyrics which enforce a love of country, and a martial enthusiasm into men's breasts, had obtained some reward for the poet. His perishable conversation was remembered by the rich to his prejudice—his imperishable lyrics were rewarded only by the admiration and tears of his fellow peasants."

Mr. Pitt's ministry gave Dibdin a pension of 200*l.* a-year for writing his *Sea Songs*;* and one cannot help remembering, that when Burns did begin to excite the ardour and patriotism of his countrymen by such songs as Mr. Cunningham has been alluding to, there were persons who had every opportunity of representing to the premier the claims of a greater than Dibdin. Lenity, indulgence, to whatever length carried in such quarters as these, would have been at once safe and graceful. What the minor politicians of the day thought of Burns's poetry I know not; but Mr. Pitt himself appreciated it as highly as any man. "I can

think of no verse," said the great minister, when Burns was no more, "I can think of no verse since Shakspeare's that has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature."†—*Lockhart's Life*.

Notes of a Reader.

THERE is a fashion in all things—even in diseases. During the reign of *nerves*, camphor julep, and cordials were in vogue. When the popular hypothesis about the *liver* prevailed, mercurial drugs were lavished in a manner that made Dr. Reynold's predict, that calomel would be taken by the tea-spoonful. "*Peptic Precepts*" perhaps prevented it. The chylipoietic functions put in their claims; and then everybody suddenly discovered they had a stomach! "Don't you think," said an hypochondriac to me one day, "that *dyspepsia* has wonderfully increased of late!" adding at the same time, "By the by, what is *dyspepsia*?—Mr. Wadd.

COFFEE.

It was owing in some measure to a distinguished French botanist, that we are so abundantly furnished with the coffee berry. Two plants were, under his care, taken to the West Indies, from the botanic gardens at Paris, but on the voyage the supply of water became nearly exhausted; this person was so anxious to preserve the plants that he deprived himself of his allowance in order to water the coffee-plants. From these two, all the coffee grown in the West Indies has sprung. Formerly, coffee could only be got at a great expense from Mocha in Arabia.

THE French academy have awarded a prize to the author of a little book, entitled *Le Visiteur des Pauvres* (Visitor of the Poor) as the production the most useful to morals. In England, many thousands are annually lavished on unworthy objects.

WINE-DRINKING.

LIGHT dry wines, such as *Hock*, *Claret*, *Burgundy*, *Rhemish*, and *Hermitage*, are, generally speaking, more salubrious than the stronger varieties, such as *Port*, *Sherry*, or *Madeira*. *Claret*, in particular, is the most wholesome wine that is known. *Champagne*, except in cases of weak digestion, is one of the safest wines that can be drunk. Its intoxicating effects are rapid, but exceedingly transient, and

* By the way, Mr. Fox's ministry gained no credit by diminishing Dibdin's pension during their brief sway by one-half.

† I am assured that Mr. Pitt used these words at the table of the late Lord Liverpool, soon after Burns's death.

depend partly upon the carbonic acid, which is evolved from it, and partly upon the alcohol, which is suspended in this gas, being applied rapidly and extensively to a large surface of the stomach.—*Macnish.*

Ledyard, the traveller, says, "I have frequently observed in Russian villages, obscure and dirty, mean and poor, that women of the peasantry paint their faces, both red and white." It would seem, therefore, that the cosmetic art is a barbarous practice.

Hollar, the engraver, worked in the house of a printseller, near Temple Bar, with an hour-glass placed before him to regulate the miserable payment to be afforded by his employer, and such was his scrupulous honesty, that he turned it whenever he was interrupted. When deserted and almost destitute of the supply of a day, he finished his large view of London from Greenwich Hill upon two sheets for Stent, another printseller; and Vertue, of whose veracity there is no reason to doubt, asserts that for his labour he was remunerated with *thirty shillings!*

THE present mayor of Leeds has lately published an important book on "Ireland; its Evils and their Remedies," in which he mentions a curious fact with reference to the alleged *overpopulousness* of the sister kingdom; namely, that there is less poverty where the population is great than where it is less. For instance, Ulster, which is the most populous province in Ireland, is decidedly the most affluent; whilst Connaught, on the other hand, the worst peopled, is confessedly the most *wretched part of the country.*

NIGHT is the time for rest:

How sweet when labours close,

To gather round an aching breast

The curtain of repose.

J. MONTGOMERY.

IT happens with Arsenic, as with most other poisons when taken into the stomach, that it occasions vomiting, and it is no uncommon thing to find persons killed by arsenic, and yet be unable to detect the smallest portion of it after death in the stomach or bowels.—*Brande.*

THE most prodigious power of the muscles is exhibited by fish. A whale moves with a velocity through the dense medium of water, that would carry him, if continued at the same rate, round the world in little more than a fortnight; and a sword-fish has been known to strike his

weapon quite through the oak plank of a ship.

IN the American rivers are fixed many *sawyers*, or bodies of trees, which yield to the pressure of the current, disappearing and appearing by turns above water, like the rotatory motion of the saw-mill, from which they have derived their name. They sometimes point up the stream, sometimes in the contrary direction. A steam-boat running on a sawyer cannot escape destruction.

SWITZERLAND.

ARRANGEMENTS are now making to extend the steam-navigation up as high as Strasbourg, which, it is expected, will be in operation in the approaching summer; and should that be found to answer, there can be no doubt that in the course of another year, it will be extended even up to Basle. This will indeed be bringing Switzerland home to our doors, and will render a trip to that enchanting country as easy as it now is to go to Paris.—*Walter's Letters from the Continent.*

MINERAL WATERS.

IF we reflect on the phenomena of mineral springs, such as the connexion obtaining between some springs and the affluent atmospheric water, we cannot help subscribing to the opinion, long entertained by chemists, that the formation of mineral waters is a simple process of solution, subject therefore to the established laws of chemical affinity. Their variety, consequently, depends on the different nature of the strata through which they flow,—upon the relative quantity of water and gas acting upon these strata,—and upon the various degrees of temperature that are enlisted in the process.—*Brande.*

FEMALE FASHIONS.

MR. REINAGLE, in a recent Lecture at the Royal Institution, said that taste was definable, was reducible to laws, and was not that vague principle that many authors asserted. He lamented that taste in this country was poisoned by the *weeds of fashion*—that the fair forms of our women, and the manly character of our men, were perpetually undergoing tasteless variations, by following the fashions of a neighbouring nation, whose character we despised, but whose costume we imitated. He concluded with a *sketch of a lady's head*, and said, if they would wear such *monstrosities of bonnets*, they ought to put them on inclining to one side or the other, and not horizontally, so that the oval form produced by such arrange-

ment, might contrast with the beautiful oval forms of their faces, which could not be effected according to the present fashion.

SOME successful experiments are now making, by a gentleman in Herefordshire, with the view of preserving valuable fruit-trees from decay, by planting young trees in the vicinity, and transfusing the sap of the young plants through the bark of the decaying tree, and thus uniting the circulation of both.

MALARIA.

A FEW years ago, at the Salpetriere, in Paris, intermittent fevers were very prevalent among the prisoners confined there; but the malaria arising from the drains or sewers being suspected as the cause, by making an alteration in the drains, this class of diseases was finally and effectually eradicated.—*Dr. Macculloch.*

Cold Punch, when well made, is always weaker than grog, or toddy; and the acid with which it is impregnated, has not only a bracing effect upon the stomach, but operates as a diuretic—thereby, counteracting in a considerable degree, the activity of the spirit itself.—*Macnish.*

"*Running-a-Muck*," (among the Malays,) consists in their rushing out in a state of frenzied excitement, heightened by fanaticism, and murdering every one who comes in their way!

It appears by a table recently published, that of the nineteen millions and a half of acres which Ireland contains, there are at this moment 4,900,000 uncultivated and perfectly capable of improvement.

CAPTAIN ROSS has presented the London University with a splendid reflecting telescope on Ramage's principle. It is as large as the famous Herschellian telescope.

THE EARWIG.

THE name of this insect, in almost all European languages, has given it a character which causes a feeling of alarm even at the sight of it. Whether or not they ever did enter the human ear is doubtful,—that they might endeavour to do so, under the influence of fear, is more than probable; and this, perhaps, has been the origin of their name, and the universal prejudice against them. As it is said that anatomists deny the possibility of their deep or dangerous entrance into the ear, it is a pity that this is not generally known, as it might defend the constitutionally timid from unnecessary alarm, and give a more favourable idea of

a part of animal creation, which forms a most necessary link in the chain of being.—*Brande's Journ.*

WET GRAVES.

IN New Orleans, water is found two feet below the surface. Those who cannot afford to procure a vault for their dead, are literally compelled to deposit them in the water.

SPIRIT OF THE Public Journals.

THE MAN WITH THE MOUTH.

"NEVER did I behold such a mouth!" This was my internal exclamation as I gazed upon the man who sat opposite to me in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh. He was an elderly personage—tall, meagre, long-chinned, hook-nosed, pale complexioned, and clothed from top to toe in a suit of black. It was wearing towards twilight, and the noble apartment in which I was seated had been forsaken by all its loungers, save myself and the man who called forth my observation. We were alone, he perusing the *Morning Chronicle*, I engaged with *Blackwood's Magazine*. The article I was reading was a capital one. It was—let me see—"Streams,"—that exquisite creation of Christopher North's matchless pen. But admirable as the article might be, it was not so admirable as the man's mouth—who perused the *Chronicle*. For some time, indeed, there was a combat between the mouth and the article, both soliciting my regards with equal ardour, and compelling me every moment to turn my eyes, first to the one and then to the other. Each possessed a magnetic property; and my mind was, like a piece of iron, reciprocally acted upon by a couple of powerful loadstones. By degrees, however, the balance was destroyed: Ebony either grew weaker, or the mouth stronger; and I was obliged, with a weeping heart, to throw the former aside, and submit myself entirely to the domination of the latter.

It was, in truth, a noble mouth, stretching, in one magnificent sweep, from ear to ear—such a mouth as the ogres of romance must have had, or the whale that swallowed Jonah. I remember the first time when—from the bottom of the stairs leading to the Fountain of Neptune—I beheld the front of Versailles' stupendous palace. One feeling only occupied my mind—that of breathless astonishment—as the huge fabric rose up before me, in sublime proportion, from the bosom of its matchless garden. Such astonishment—such breathlessness came over me, when

my eyes first encountered the man, or rather his mouth. I was more than astonished; I was delighted—delighted, as when stepping into the Sistine Chapel, the grand creations of Michael Angelo, frescoed upon its roof and walls, burst like a glimpse of Paradise upon my tranced spirit. Such was the delight afforded by the mighty mouth: not the man—beloved reader—for men as fair in all respects as he have I often seen. It was not his cheeks, thin as parchment, his nose curved like an eagle's beak, his chin prominent as a bayonet in full charge, or his complexion, pale and lustreless as a faded lily. It was not these—no, reader, it was not these which operated with such wizard power upon me. It was his mouth that mouth—wonderful as Versailles, and beautiful as the Sistine Chapel—which carried my sympathies away, and led me a captive worshipper at its shrine.

Such were my first impressions on beholding the Man with the Mouth. They were those of unmingled awe and pleasure, and appealed with resistless effect to my imagination. They came upon me like a rainbow bursting out from the bosom of a dark cloud—as a stream of sunshine at midnight—as the sound of the Eolian harp in a summer eve. But they appealed to the fancy alone; they touched the heart, but not the head; and it was some time before the latter could bring its energies to bear, so completely had it been overwhelmed with the tumult of passions which agitated the feelings. It did act at last; and as soon as the incipient impressions subsided a little, I felt an irresistible desire to ascertain why such wonderful effects should spring from such a cause. But it was in vain; and being neither casuist nor phrenologist, I was obliged to drop a subject, to which my powers were altogether unequal. I wondered, and was delighted; but what the remote springs of such wonder and delight might be, baffled my philosophy, and set my reasoning faculties at naught.

Meanwhile the man continued opposite to me, reading the *Chronicle*, and I continued to look at him, marvelling at the dimensions of that feature which had vanquished Christopher North in single combat, and absorbed his beautiful "Streams" in its insatiable gulf. He never turned his eyes from the paper; they were rigidly fixed upon its democratic columns; and, but for the motion of his hands, as he shifted it up and down, I should have supposed him an image carved for some Dutch college by Chantry, or Thorwaldson the Dane. I had no curiosity about the man: his name, his country, his profession, his character, were alike matters

of indifference. I would not have given the toss of a farthing to know all about them. My attention was engaged with a nobler theme. I was analyzing his mouth, admiring the blandness of its expression, wondering at its hugeness, and envying its happy owner the possession of so magnificent a characteristic.

When I first noticed this marvellous man it was six o'clock, which at that very moment pealed from the clock of St. Giles; and the room, as I have already stated, was becoming obscured with the shades of approaching eve. The light which glared in at the windows was sullen and sepulchral, and flung a broad, dull radiance upon the fluted Corinthian columns, that extended their double rows along the library, supporting its painted roof upon their foliated capitals. Within and without all was calm. Save our two selves, there was not a soul in the apartment. The librarian had gone, Lord knows whither—the advocates had bidden their literary *sanctum* adieu, and the man with the mouth and myself were left in undisputed possession of the premises.

We had now sat for a considerable time together, he reading the *Chronicle*, I admiring his mouth. It was certainly the most extraordinary mouth ever created, and challenged observation in an uncommon degree. His whole face was absorbed in this mighty feature. He had, it is true, ears, and eyes, and cheeks, and nose, and chin; but they were pigmied to nothing in such a lordly neighbourhood. He was, in fact, earless, eyeless, cheekless, noseless, and chinless. To speak comparatively, he had neither the one nor the other: he was all mouth.

The mouth was, in fact, omnipotent: it would be wronging it to say that it belonged to the man, for the man belonged to it. It was to him body and soul; and the other parts of his frame, such as trunk, limbs, and head, were merely its appendages.

Hitherto the mouth had been quiescent; not a muscle of it had moved, while its appendage, the man, was employed at his occupation. It was fixed, rigid, and apparently as incapable of change as the eternal rocks. I had even begun to wonder whether it possessed the power of motion—whether it could open and shut like other mouths—whether, in a word, its powers were equal to its pretensions. But these unworthy surmises were soon put to flight; for, on looking attentively, I perceived, with a feeling of intense awe, that it began to move. Upon my honour, the lips began to separate, first a hairbreadth—then two—then three—then a whole line—and at last half an inch.

There was a solemn grandeur about the process of opening. The mouth was unquestionably one of too much importance to open itself on trifling occasions, or in a trifling manner. It performed the operation slowly, deliberately, sublimely; and I looked on with the same breathless anxiety as when listening in the Great Glen of Scotland to the expectant bursting of a thunder-cloud, which hangs in threatening mood over the summit of Ben-nevis. To say that it resembled a church-door would be doing it injustice—no church-door, even the main one of Notre-Dame or St. Paul's, ever expanded its huge jaws with such deliberate majesty. Reader, if you have seen the opening of the dock-gates at Portsmouth, or of the locks on the Caledonian Canal, you may form some idea of that of the mouth.

I think I said it had opened half an inch; to do so it took no less than three minutes; this I particularly noticed. "Now," said I, "this mouth is capable of expanding at least twelve times that length, or six inches. Three minutes to half an inch make six minutes to a whole inch. Six multiplied by six make thirty-six. In all, one half hour and six minutes must elapse before this glorious mouth can attain its *ne plus ultra*."

While this process was going on, day waned apace, and twilight was on the point of being succeeded by darkness. Those broad floods of light which bathed the pillars with their lurid lustre, were becoming fainter and fainter—and nocturnal gloom threatened, in a few minutes, to reign "lord of the ascendant." But this approaching obscurity was no impediment to the mouth. It opened wider every instant. At last it attained the climax of its extension; and, wide as it was, would stretch no farther. The mouth, after all, was not so omnipotent as I supposed. There were limits to its powers, and after thirty-six minutes of incessant operation, it had done its best.

I now began to wonder what object my opposite neighbour could have in opening his mouth to such an apocryphal extent—or rather what could tempt the mouth itself to perform so extraordinary an exploit—for, somehow, I could never think of it as being under the control of the man. It could not be to eat, for eatables abound not in libraries; nor to speak, for speech requires not such oral dimensions. It was for neither; the purpose for which it condescended to open itself was nobler far. It was to give a *yawn*, which sounded through the apartment—shook me on my seat, and made the proudest folio quiver like an aspen from its firm foundation. I never heard such

a yawn: it was worthy of the great source from whence it emanated; it was worthy of the Advocates' Library; and, as its echo sounded from shelf to shelf, from pillar to pillar, and from table to table, I thought that it would rival the loudest yawn ever uttered by luckless wight, while luxuriating in the recondite pages of that profound philosopher, Dr. Black. Kings might have owned it, heroes claimed it as their own, sages contended for it, poets sung about it. In one word, it was worthy of the Man with the Mouth. Need more be said? Answer, "No."

Nor was this the only yawn. There were one, two, three, each louder than its predecessor. The last in particular was tremendous, and filled me with awe and admiration. I even yawned myself in hopeless rivalry; but I might as well have tried to outbrave the thunders of Jove with a popgun, as enter the lists with this most doughty opponent.

These mighty yawns being at an end, I naturally concluded that the mouth would resume its former condition—that it would close and be as when I first beheld it. But it closed not. Dark as the evening was, I saw that the man still gaped—that his mouth was as wide as ever: he seemed, in truth, yawning, though inaudibly. He no longer perused upon the *Chronicle*; this the darkness rendered a hopeless attempt; and he quietly deposited the paper upon the table and looked at me—not with his eyes, but with his mouth. I cannot describe the feelings which pervaded me at this time. The room was almost pitch dark; no relic of the solar influence remained behind; the pillars had lost the gaudy lustre lent them by the twilight, and stood like rows of sable giants in their respective places, while a silence, dread and drear as the grave, prevailed on every side. My admiration—my love—my respect for the mouth was as great as ever, but in a short time they began to be coupled with fear; and had it not been for some mysterious witchery exercised upon my understanding, I believe I should have taken leg-bail, and left the man to yawn and gape till the "crack of doom." The library was robbed in darkness; true—but that did not prevent me from seeing him. Obscurity could not shroud him. He still gaped prodigiously. His mouth was large, round, and deep, and formed a circle in the centre of his face—a black circle, only broken at the top of his nose, which peeped over it—and below by his chin, which protruded forward as if to harmonize with the nasal protuberance, and render the symmetry perfect. I saw also his eyes, that shone like two lambent

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There was a solemn grandeur about the process of opening. The mouth was unquestionably one of too much importance to open itself on trifling occasions, or in a trifling manner. It performed the operation slowly, deliberately, sublimely; and I looked on with the same breathless anxiety as when listening in the Great Glen of Scotland to the expectant bursting of a thunder-cloud, which hangs in threatening mood over the summit of Ben-nevis. To say that it resembled a church-door would be doing it injustice—no church-door, even the main one of Notre-Dame or St. Paul's, ever expanded its huge jaws with such deliberate majesty. Reader, if you have seen the opening of the dock-gates at Portsmouth, or of the locks on the Caledonian Canal, you may form some idea of that of the mouth.

I think I said it had opened half an inch; to do so it took no less than three minutes; I particularly noticed. "Now," said I, "this mouth is capable of expanding at least twelve times that length, or six inches. Three minutes to half an inch make six minutes to a whole inch. Six multiplied by six make thirty-six. In all, one half hour and six minutes must elapse before this glorious mouth can attain its *ne plus ultra*."

While this process was going on, day waned apace, and twilight was on the point of being succeeded by darkness. Those broad floods of light which bathed the pillars with their lurid lustre, were becoming fainter and fainter—and nocturnal gloom threatened, in a few minutes, to reign "lord of the ascendant." But this approaching obscurity was no impediment to the mouth. It opened wider every instant. At last it attained the climax of its extension; and, wide as it was, would stretch no farther. The mouth, after all, was not so omnipotent as I supposed. There were limits to its powers, and after thirty-six minutes of incessant operation, it had done its best.

I now began to wonder what object my opposite neighbour could have in opening his mouth to such an apocryphal extent—or rather what could tempt the mouth itself to perform so extraordinary an exploit—for, somehow, I could never think of it as being under the control of the man. It could not be to eat, for eatables abound not in libraries; nor to speak, for speech requires not such oral dimensions. It was for neither; the purpose for which it condescended to open itself was nobler far. It was to give a *yawn*, which sounded through the apartment—shook me on my seat, and made the proudest folio quiver like an aspen from its firm foundation. I never heard such

a yawn: it was worthy of the great source from whence it emanated: it was worthy of the Advocates' Library; and, as its echo sounded from shelf to shelf, from pillar to pillar, and from table to table, I thought that it would rival the loudest yawn ever uttered by luckless wight, while luxuriating in the recondite pages of that profound philosopher, Dr. Black. Kings might have owned it, heroes claimed it as their own, sages contended for it, poets sung about it. In one word, it was worthy of the Man with the Mouth. Need more be said? Answer, "No."

Nor was this the only yawn. There were one, two, three, each louder than its predecessor. The last in particular was tremendous, and filled me with awe and admiration. I even yawned myself in hopeless rivalry; but I might as well have tried to outbrave the thunders of Jove with a popgun, as enter the lists with this most doughty opponent.

These mighty yawns being at an end, I naturally concluded that the mouth would resume its former condition—that it would close and be as when I first beheld it. But it closed not. Dark as the evening was, I saw that the man still gaped—that his mouth was as wide as ever: he seemed, in truth, yawning, though inaudibly. He no longer perused upon the *Chronicle*; this the darkness rendered a hopeless attempt; and he quietly deposited the paper upon the table and looked at me—not with his eyes, but with his mouth. I cannot describe the feelings which pervaded me at this time. The room was almost pitch dark; no relic of the solar influence remained behind; the pillars had lost the gaudy lustre lent them by the twilight, and stood like rows of sable giants in their respective places, while a silence, dread and drear as the grave, prevailed on every side. My admiration—my love—my respect for the mouth was as great as ever, but in a short time they began to be coupled with fear; and had it not been for some mysterious witchery exercised upon my understanding, I believe I should have taken leg-bail, and left the man to yawn and gape till the "crack of doom." The library was robed in darkness; true—but that did not prevent me from seeing him. Obscurity could not shroud him. He still gaped prodigiously. His mouth was large, round, and deep, and formed a circle in the centre of his face—a black circle, only broken at the top of his nose, which peeped over it—and below by his chin, which protruded forward as if to harmonize with the nasal protuberance, and render the symmetry perfect. I saw also his eyes, that shone like two lambent

lights, and shed a sepulchral lustre around the boundaries of his awful and mysterious mouth.

Altogether I felt alarmed—still respect for the remarkable object of my meditations bound me to my seat; and though minutes and hours passed by, I was yet gazing intently at it. I could perceive no diminution of its size; it was still the same yawning gulf—the same “antre vast,” which gave birth to the portentous yawns. On one side I sat rapt in a frenzied awe; on the other, sat the Man with the Mouth, like an idol, commanding and compelling my adoration. I knew not what to make of him—or rather of his mouth. There was something surprising in the whole business; and now, for the first time, did I feel my respect for this wonderful feature beginning to decline. The gradual opening of the feature was fine—the yawning magnificent—but such a persevering system of gaping seemed to me absurd. There was something in it which shocked my causality; and I began to suspect that, after all, the man was somewhat of an ass, and his mouth a very so so affair, scarcely worthy the time and trouble it had cost me.

At last, what with violent excitement and the fatigue of gazing, my imagination got violently agitated. I no longer saw things with my own eyes, but with the optics of fancy, and revelled in a profusion of extravagant and unbridled thought. The man who at first seemed nameless and unknown, was now invested with a “habitation and a name.” His habitation was Eternity, and his name was TIME. That mouth was the gulf of oblivion into which all things must pass, save those doomed to endure for ever.

“A change came o’er the spirit of my dream.” In a moment the library, which had been silent, dark, and deserted, was lighted up, and crowded with wonted visitors. Three hundred advocates in their gowns paraded its vista—three hundred gentlemen learned in the law! I was amazed at it—not so Time. He chuckled with delight, and (*mirabile dictu*) gaped wider than before.

It was a night of miracles. Those thousands of tomes which crowded the shelves seemed stricken with a dead palsy. The shelves themselves shook with trepidation, and their inhabitants tumbled with “hideous ruin and combustion” upon the floor. Shakspeare, Milton, Scott, and some others, kept their accustomed births, but the multitudinous mass started from *theirs* in dismay, as if some dreadful angel had pronounced their doom.

What did Time? He raised his right hand, and the volumes, as if borne upon

some mighty stream, came rushing towards him. I heard their leaves fluttering in agony; and commingled with their agitations came the groans of living and dead authors, bewailing their luckless offspring. The mouth, as they approached it, grew wider; and into its abyss sunk reams of paper innumerable, blackened with oceans of printers’ ink.

Another freak of Time. He again raised his hand, and the three hundred gentlemen learned in the law, approached him by an irresistible impulse, and were instantly sucked into that mouth from whose vortex there is no return.

One caprice of imagination leads to another. A table was spread in the centre of the room, and a knot of worthy souls were busily enjoying themselves. They were the members of the Noctes Ambrosianæ. North was there, and Tickler, and Hogg, and O’Doherty, and Mullion, and the rest of that illustrious band. And when the mouth saw them, he elevated his dexter-hand a third time—but its spell was unavailing now. North shook his crutch at him in derision—the Shepherd saluted him with a guffaw of contempt—Mullion snapped his fingers in his face—O’Doherty discharged a brandy bottle at his head—and Tickler swore he did not value him a pipe-stopper.—Poor mouth, he was quite chop-fallen!

I pitied him. There is something painful in witnessing the failure of one who has been invariably victorious; and in spite of my respect for those excellent friends, who had set him at defiance, I would rather have seen them sucked into the Lethæan gulf, than witnessed his overthrow. I pitied him profoundly, for his faculties of devourment were next to boundless; and it was lamentable to think that there dwelt on this ball of earth any power capable of saying, “thus far shalt thou come, and no farther.” Time, or the Man with the Mouth, or whatever name we choose to call him by, felt his situation bitterly. He did not gnash his teeth; that would have been a tedious business to one whose mouth required thirty-six minutes to open, and doubtless as many to shut—but the tears rolled down his pallid cheeks, and deep, long-drawn sighs of anguish and disappointment proceeded from the bottom of his heart.

To assuage sorrow was always one of my principles. My heart is ever open “to the sweet music of humanity;” and I resolved to pour consolation into the spirit of this injured one. “Yes, Mouth! I shall assuage thy matchless griefs,” said I, weeping bitterly, while I buried my eyes in my handkerchief with one

hand, and seized that of the object of my philanthropy with the other. Scarcely had I done so, than the Mouth uttered these awful words—"Friend, thou art more free than welcome!"—and, on looking up to see what they could import, I found that I was seated in the travellers' room of the Hen and Chickens at Birmingham, and had caught by the nose a worthy quaker, who was at that moment occupied in devouring a savoury dish of pork-chops and sausages.

A MODERN PYTHAGOREAN.

Blackwood's Magazine.

ODE ON THE DISTANT PROSPECT OF A GOOD DINNER.

Y^e distant dishes, sideboards blest
With Halford's peptic pill—
Where grateful gourmands still attest
Illustrious Robert's skill;
And ye that, girt with *legumes* round,
Or in the purest pastry bound,
On silvery surface lie;
Where *pâté-saini*—sauce *tomate*,
Fricandeau framed with nicest art
Attract the glist'ning eye.

Ah! richest scent! perfume beloved!
Blest odours breathed in vain—
Where once my raptured palate roved,
And fain would rove again.
I feel the gales that now ascend,
A momentary craving lend—
As curling round the vapours seem
My faded faculties t'excite,
Restore my long-pall'd appetite,
And soothe me with their steam.

Say, Monsieur Ude, for thou hast seen
Full many a jovial set
Discoursing on *la bonne cuisine*,
In social union met—
Who foremost now prepare to pray
Des cotelettes à la chicorée!
Sauté de saumon—qui l'attend?
What young Amphitryons now vote
Nothing like *pigeons en compôte*,
Or taste the *vol-au-vent*?

While some at lighter viands aim,
And towards digestion lean,
Poularde aux truffes, or *à la crème*,
Or *agneau aux racines*;
Some hardier epicures disdain
The distant chance of doubtful pain,
And *queue d'esturgeon* try;
Still as they eat they long to cease,
They feel a pang as every piece
PASSES their palate by.

But lo! the *entremets* are placed
To greet the gourmand's nose,
Bedeck'd with all the pride of paste,
Confective prowess shows.
One earnestly devotes his praise
To *beignets à la lyonnaise*,
Others survey with mix'd delight
Gelées d'orange—de marasquin;
While some, with looks ecstatic, scan
The *soufflé's* buoyant height.

Best fare is theirs by — fed,
Less pleasing to digest;
The taste soon zone, and in its stead,
Oppression on the chest.
Their's joyous hours, and jocund nights,
Wit's playful sallies, fancy's flights,
And goodly cheer as e'er was seen—
The aged Hock—the Champagne bright,

Burgundia's best, and Claret light,
The vintage of nineteen.

Alas! regardless of their doom
Each rich ragout they take,
No sense have they of pains to come,
Of head or stomach-ache.
Yet see how all around them press,
Th' attendants of each night's excess;
Fell indigestion's followers vile;
Ah! show them where the hateful crew
Scoff calomel and pills of blue,
Ah! tell them they have bile.

These shall the Gout tormenting rack,
The Vampire of the toes,
Night-mare, Lumbago in the back,
And Cholick's painful throes;
Or languid liver waste their youth,
Or caries of a double tooth.
It's victims' nerves that nightly gnaws.
Vertigo—Apoplexy—Spiles,
The feverish hand—the visage green,
The lengthen'd lantern jaws.

This, a *consommé*, precious prize!
Is tempted now to try;
To restless nights a sacrifice,
And dire acidity.
Till throbs of heart-burn—ague's pangs,
And Cholera's fiercely-fixing fangs,
Have left him, liverless, to moan.
The bloated form—the pimpled face,
The tottering step—th' expiring trace
Of good digestion gone.

To each his twitches, all are men,
Condemned to pick their bone;
The poor man in another's den,
The rich man in his own.
Yet, why should I of torments treat?
Since we were made to eat and drink,
Why should I prophesy their pain?
Stomachs were form'd for holding food—
No more—while our digestion's good,
'Tis folly to abstain. *Ibid.*

Arcana of Science.

Cure for the Small Pox.

At a meeting of the French Royal Academy of Medicine, Mons. Vulpéan read an essay to prove that if the pustules in this disease be cauterized within two days after the eruption, they die away entirely, and if even later, their duration is abridged, and no traces of them are left. The caustic which he used, was a solution of nitrate of silver, into which he dipped a probe, with which he pierced the centre of each pustule; this remedy he had tried in numerous cases with a very good effect.—(*For the Mirror.*)

Jacobus.

Ancient Cannon raised from the Sea.

A fisherman of Calais drew up a cannon, of very ancient form, from the bottom of the sea, by means of his nets. M. de Rheims has since removed the rust from it, and on taking off the breech, was much surprised to find the piece still charged. Specimens of the powder have been taken, from which, of course, all the saltpetre has disappeared, after a submersion of three centuries. The ball was of lead, and was not oxidized to a depth greater than that of a line.—*Journal des Débats.*

Assamese Method of Blasting Rocks.

The Assamese close the mouth of the hole by driving in with a mallet a stout wooden plug some inches in length, through which a touchhole is bored. Between the powder and the lower part of the plug an interval of several inches is left; the communication is perfected by means of a tin tube filled with powder, and passed through the centre of the plug.—*Monthly Mag.*

Purification of Alcohol.

A prize was offered by the Royal Academy of Brussels to the person who should prove upon what the differences between alcohol, extracted from various substances, as fruits, grain, roots, sugar, &c. depended. This was obtained by M. Hensmans, who was led, by numerous experiments, to conclude that the alcohol was always identical, but that the difficulty, more or less great, always found in rectifying it, as well also as the difference in taste, depended upon the presence of a fatty matter, and a little acetic ether. The fatty matter, when alone, may be separated by several distillations, but the acetic ether is not removed in this way. It is better, in every case, for the removal of both, to add a little caustic potash, or soda, to the alcohol, to be rectified. Carbonated alkali does not act with sufficient energy.—*Bull. Univ.*

Method of obtaining the Figure of a Plant.

A piece of paper is to be rubbed over with powdered dragon's blood, in the manner practised by engravers, and then the small branch or leaf of which the design is required is to be laid upon it; by means of slight friction it soon takes up a small quantity of the powder, and being then laid upon moistened paper, an impression is to be taken in the manner practised for lithography without a machine. This process may be usefully employed for preserving certain physiological and characteristic features, which cannot be retained by drying the plant.—*Bull. Univ.*

The Gatherer.

"A snapper-up of unconcerned trifles."
(SHAKESPEARE.)

SWIFTIANA.

The common fluency of speech in many men, and most women, is owing to a scarcity of matter, and a scarcity of words; for whoever is a master of language, and has a mind full of ideas, will be apt in speaking to hesitate upon the choice of both; whereas common speak-

ers have only one set of ideas, and one set of words to clothe them in; and these are always ready at the mouth; as people come faster out of a church when it is almost empty, than when a crowd is at the door.

Old men and comets have been revered for the same reason; their long beards, and pretences to foretell events.

A person was asked at court, what he thought of an ambassador and his train, who were all embroidery and lace, full of bows, cringes, and gestures; he said, it was Solomon's importation, gold and apes.

C THREE ROYAL QUESTIONS.

KING Henry the Eighth having a month's mind to the Abbot of Glastonbury's estate (who was one of the richest abbots in England) sent for him to his court, and told him, that unless he could resolve him three questions, he should not escape with his life. The abbot, willing to get out of his clutches, promised his best endeavours. The king's questions were these: first, *Of what compass the world was about?* Secondly, *How deep the sea was?* And, thirdly, *What the king thought?* The abbot desired some few days' respite, which being granted, he returned home, but with intent never to see the king again, for he thought the questions impossible to be resolved. His grief coming at last to the ears of his cook, he undertook, upon forfeiture of his life, to resolve these riddles, and to free his master from danger. The abbot willingly consented. The cook put on the abbot's clothes, and at the time appointed went to the court, and being like the abbot, was taken by all the courtiers to be the same man. When he came before the king, he thus resolved his three questions: First, *Of what compass the world was about?* He said, "It was but twenty-four hours journey, and if a man went as fast as the sun, he might easily go it in that space." The second, *How deep the sea was?* He answered, "Only a stone's cast; for throw a stone into the deepest place of it, and in time it will come to the bottom." To the third, "which I conceive," saith he, "your majesty thinks the most difficult to resolve; but indeed it is the easiest, that is, *What your highness thinks?*" He answered, "That you think me to be the abbot of Glastonbury, when as indeed I am but Jack his cook."

Printed and Published by J. LIMBIRD, 123, Strand, (near Somerset-House), London; and ERNEST FLEISCHER, 626, New Market, Leipzig; and sold by all Newsmen and Book sellers.